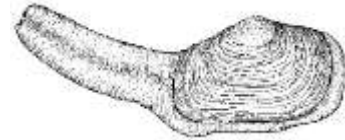

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:

Eric Coonradt

Justin Breese

Phone: (907) 747-6688

Fax: (907) 747-6693

(907) 225-3756

(907) 225-5195

Sitka Area Office

304 Lake Street, Rm. 103

Sitka, Alaska 99835

Date: August 23, 2012

Time: 3:15 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 2012 SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL GEODUCK CLAM FISHERY

Sitka . . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) announced today the following information concerning the September commercial geoduck clam season in Southeast Alaska:

The Sitka commercial geoduck clam season will begin with paralytic shellfish poison (PSP) testing on Tuesday, September 4 and based on results of PSP testing the first fishery will be held on Thursday, September 6, 2012. After the initial week, subsequent weekly fisheries will occur on Wednesdays and Fridays. Daily fishing hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., unless the department reduces the hours for management purposes. Fishing areas will be opened only if the PSP results are below 80µg. Open fishing periods and locations will be announced by ADF&G news release after the results of PSP testing have been determined.

In the Ketchikan registration area, there is one area with remaining quota for the 2011/12 season. The PSP testing for the remaining area, Vegas/Hotspur Island, is planned for Sunday, September 16. This area will be opened based on the results of the PSP testing. If the PSP results are below 80µg, a fishery will occur on Thursday, September 20, 2012. The open fishing period will be announced by ADF&G news release after the results of PSP testing have been determined.

Regulation under 5 AAC 38.142 (k) allows the department to establish trip limits in the commercial geoduck fishery. Trip limits may be imposed in areas with small initial guideline harvest levels (GHL's) or areas with little remaining GHL's.

A Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit and a vessel registration are required prior to fishing in either the Ketchikan or Sitka registration areas. Both the Sitka and Ketchikan areas require a separate registration. Additionally, harvesters are required to contact the department during business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at least two business days before the weekly opening, prior to fishing for geoducks in a different registration management area. Business day means days other than Saturday, Sunday, or a state holiday. Monday, September 3 is Labor Day and all state offices will be closed.

The Department will continue the mandatory logbook program for geoduck clams (5AAC 38.142(m)). This requires that logbooks be filled out before departing the harvest site and returned to ADF&G within 7 days of delivery. This data provides biologists with information on new and existing geoduck clam beds. Logbook pages can be picked up at ADFG offices. All logbook information will remain confidential. Logbooks should be turned in with fish tickets or mailed directly to the Petersburg ADF&G office C/O Jeff Meucci at P.O. 667, Petersburg, AK 99833.

In January of 2003 the Alaska Board of Fisheries gave the ADF&G authority to manage the commercial geoduck fishery based on PSP levels [5 AAC 38.142 (a)]. In cooperation with the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fishery Association (SARDFA) and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), geoduck areas are tested for PSP and certified for live sale. The ADF&G will manage areas as distinct commercial fishing areas.

No alternative sampling programs will be allowed concurrent with the inseason sampling protocol.

Information on the PSP levels by area and date of testing is posted on the internet at <http://info.dec.state.ak.us/eh/lab/GeoDuck.aspx>. There is also a link to the PSP results located on the SARDFA web site located at www.sardfa.org. ADF&G has recorded message telephones for up-to-date information at 225-6870 (Ketchikan).

Guideline Harvest Levels by Areas:

District 1:

Vegas and Hotspur Islands (Subdistrict 101-25-003): will be open for a remaining harvest of 37,500 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters west of a line from a point, on the northwest side of Duke Island, at 54°57.72' N. latitude, 131°27.42' W. longitude to a point, on the northeast tip of a Vegas Island, at 54°58.18' N. latitude, 131°27.64' W. longitude and continuing north to a point, approximately 0.2 miles southeast of the Ajax Reef Light, at 54°59.98' N. latitude, 131°27.53' W. longitude, and east of a line from Point White to a point, in Sealed Passage, at 54°55.80' N. latitude, 131°30.45' W. longitude to Moss Point, on Annette Island.

District 13:

Symonds Bay (Subdistrict 113-31-002): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 4,800 pounds of whole geoduck clams only in those waters of Symonds Bay on Biorka Island south of a line from the westernmost tip of Hanus Island at 56°51.90' N. latitude, 135°30.50' W. longitude, to the easternmost tip of Entrance Island at 56°51.92' N. latitude, 135°31.52' W. longitude.

Taigud and Kolosh Islands Area (Subdistricts 113-31-004, 113-41-004): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 1,400 pounds of whole geoduck clams only in those waters along the western coast of Baranof Island and associated offshore islands south and east of a line from Cape Burunof to the northernmost tip of Little Biorka Island, and north and east of a line from a point at the southern entrance of Kliuchevoi Bay at 56°50.18' N. latitude, 135°22.67' W. longitude to a point, southwest of Fragrant Island, at 56°50.08' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude, to a point, approximately midway between Torsar Island and Blackbird Island, at 56°50.48' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude, to Middle Rock, to the northernmost tip of Hanus Island, and to the northernmost tip of Little Biorka I.

Harvesters are reminded that waters described in 5 AAC 38.142(3)(A) and (B), located within the above described area, are closed to the commercial harvest of geoduck clams.

Biorka Channel and Legma Island Area (Subdistrict 113-31-003): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 9,100 pounds of whole geoduck clams only in those waters east of a line from the northeasternmost tip of Hanus Island to a point on the southeast shore of Biorka Island at 56°50.55' N. latitude, 135°30.97' W. longitude to a point, 0.5 miles southeast of Jug Island, 56°47.10' N. latitude, 135°25.60' W. longitude; and south and west of a line from the northeasternmost tip of Hanus Island to the westernmost tip of Middle Rock to a point, approximately midway between Torsar Island and Blackbird Island, at 56°50.48' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude, to a point, approximately 0.5 miles southeast of Jug Island, located at 56°47.10' N. latitude, 135°25.60' W. longitude.

Elovoi, Golf, and Gornoi Islands area (Subdistrict 113-31-005): will open for a guideline harvest level of 1,200 pounds of whole geoduck clams in the waters enclosed by a line from the southern entrance of Kliuchevoi Bay at 56°50.18' N. latitude, 135°22.67' W. longitude to a point located at 56°50.08' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude (southwest of Fragrant Island), to a point located at 56°47.10' N. latitude, 135°25.60' W. longitude (approximately 0.45 nm southeast of Jug Island) to a point located at 56° 41.97' N. latitude, 135° 17.52' W. longitude (southern tip of Scow Island) to a point located at 56° 41.73' N. latitude, 135°15.5' W. longitude (southernmost tip of Beauchamp Island).

Closed waters: The waters of Middle Channel east of a line from 56° 44.10' N. latitude, 135° 14.77' W. longitude to 56° 44.37' N. latitude, 135°15.02' W. longitude and West Crawfish Inlet east of a line from 56° 46.28' N. latitude 135° 16.39' W. longitude to 56° 46.69' N. latitude to 135° 17.21' W. longitude will be closed to the harvest of geoduck clams.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
<i>ADFG</i>	<i>225-5195</i>	<i>772-3801</i>	<i>874-3822</i>	<i>747-6688</i>	<i>465-4250</i>	<i>766-2830</i>	<i>784-3255</i>
<i>AWT</i>	<i>225-5111</i>	<i>772-3983</i>	<i>874-3215</i>	<i>747-3254</i>	<i>465-4000</i>	<i>766-2533</i>	<i>784-3220</i>